

From: Stephanie Bogema **On Behalf Of** The Office of Senator O'Brien
Subject: FW: Grand Rapids Home for Veterans Abuse Investigation

Written testimony for committee today from Dave Hall who used to serve on the Board of Managers.

I would like to submit the following information to Senator O'Brien concerning hearings being held regarding the abuse and neglect allegations of the Veterans at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. I was on the Board of Managers for our states Veterans Homes when a report was submitted to the Board meeting held at the Grand Rapids Home on March 9, 2011. In attendance at that meeting were most of the Board, both Administrators for the Jacobetti Home (Brad Slagle) and Sara Dunne for the G.R. Home. Also Jason Allen, Deputy Director of Military and Veterans Affairs, Margaret Nelson from the Attorney Generals office, many Home staff and many from the general public. The room was packed. At the end of the testimony given by the chair and vice chair of the union concerning the abuse and neglect issue, Board Chairman Ernest Meyers asked the Board if there were any comments concerning the report. To my amazement not one person sitting at the table or others in the room asked to speak. I was shocked, as I viewed these allegations very serious and something that needed to be investigated. Seeing no one else was willing to speak up, I asked the Chair for the floor. I then questioned the two union members making the report about documentation and who they had sent the report to. I then asked Administrator Dunne if she were aware of the report and had she responded back to the union concerning the issues. Yes she was aware and no she had not responded. Citing my years of working for the state in Mental Health Department, I asked Ms. Nelson from the Attorney Generals office if the Board now had a legal responsibility to conduct an investigation into these allegations, as we were told in Mental Health that if abuse or neglect were reported to us, we were legally responsible to report up the chain of command and to the state police. She responded in the affirmative. I then turned to the Chair, Ernest Meyers and made a motion that our committee convene a subcommittee and I offered to chair and move forward with an investigation. The Chair said that he would take my motion under advisement but wanted to table it until he had the opportunity to speak with Ms. Dunne. My recollection is that the meeting ended shortly thereafter. Mr. Allen was sitting next to me during this meeting. After hearing the testimony about the private/contracted workers being accused of these misconduct, I reminded him this was the reason that as long as I were on the Board, I would never support the Veterans Home direct care staff being privatized. I cited low wages, little or no benefits, little or no experience or training, as several of the reasons privatization should not happen. THREE HOURS after that meeting, I received a phone call from the Governors Office letting me know that my services were no longer needed on the Board.

For March 10, 2016 Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security Committee meeting